General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 February 2016

Seventieth session
Agenda item 72 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2015

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/70/489/Add.2)*]

70/164. Measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons

The General Assembly,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[2] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[3] the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[4] and other relevant human rights instruments,

Reaffirming the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,[5]

Recalling its resolution 57/167 of 18 December 2002, in which it endorsed the Political Declaration[6] and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[7] its resolution 58/134 of 22 December 2003, in which it took note, inter alia, of the road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, and its resolution 60/135 of 16 December 2005 and subsequent resolutions on the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and recalling also Human Rights Council resolutions 21/23 of 28 September 2012[8] and 24/20 of 27 September 2013[9] on the human rights of older persons,

Noting with appreciation the work of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, appointed by the Human Rights Council,

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[4] Ibid., vol. 2515, No. 44910.

[5] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[6] *Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 8–12 April 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.IV.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[7] Ibid., annex II.

[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/67/53/Add.1), chap. III.

[9] Ibid., *Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 53A* (A/68/53/Add.1), chap. III.

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Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing[10] and the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights of older persons,[11]

Noting with appreciation the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing,[12] and recognizing the valuable contributions of Member States, as well as relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and relevant non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and invited panellists, during the six working sessions of the Working Group,

Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[13] and stressing the need to ensure that no one is left behind, including older persons,

Noting the developments at the regional level towards the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, such as the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of Human Rights of Older Persons,

Noting also that, between 2015 and 2030, the number of persons aged 60 years or over in the world is projected to grow by 56 per cent, from 901 million to 1.4 billion,[14] and recognizing that the increase in the number of older people will be the greatest and the most rapid in the developing world,

Recognizing the essential contribution that older men and women can make to the functioning of societies and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,

Concerned at the multiple forms of discrimination that may affect older persons and at the high incidence of poverty among them, especially older women, persons with disabilities, persons of African descent, indigenous peoples, persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, rural persons, persons living on the streets and refugees, among other groups,

Noting that older women outnumber older men, and noting with concern that older women often face multiple forms of discrimination or can be victims of violence, resulting from their gender-based roles in society, compounded by their age or disability or on other grounds, which affects the enjoyment of their human rights,

Recognizing that, at the international level, the diversity of policies, standards and mechanisms aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of older persons may lead to a lack of consistent protection of their rights,

Recognizing also that the current approach at the international level regarding the promotion and protection of the rights and dignity of older persons may lead, on some occasions, to gaps in reporting on, and monitoring of, existing treaty obligations towards older persons,

Recognizing further that the issues related to ageing are often not sufficiently visible and that further progress needs to be made in the effective enjoyment and realization of all human rights of older persons, while acknowledging the

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[10] A/70/185.

[11] E/2012/51 and Corr.1.

[12] See A/AC.278/2015/2.

[13] Resolution 70/1.

[14] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables* (ESA/P/WP.241).

importance of strengthening efforts to increase the visibility of and sensitize the population to those issues and to address ways to ensure the effective integration of older persons into society,

Noting that the various efforts made to increase cooperation and integration and the increasing awareness of and sensitivity to ageing issues since the adoption of the Madrid Plan of Action by Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, should be further strengthened in order to better promote full and effective participation by and opportunities for older persons in economic, social, cultural and political life,

Noting also that the situation of older persons presents a number of particular and urgent human rights challenges related to the enjoyment of their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights that deserve in-depth analysis,

1. *Recognizes* the challenges related to the enjoyment of all human rights that older persons face in areas such as prevention of and protection against violence and abuse, social protection, food and nutrition, housing, employment, legal capacity, access to justice, health services, including physical and mental health support, and long-term and palliative care services, and that those challenges require in-depth analysis and action to better address them;

2. *Also recognizes* that the challenges faced by many older persons impede their social, economic and cultural participation and the full enjoyment of their human rights;

3. *Calls upon* all States to promote and ensure the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons, including by taking measures to combat age discrimination, neglect, abuse and violence, and to address issues related to social integration and adequate health care, bearing in mind the crucial importance of strengthening intergenerational partnerships and solidarity;

4. *Recognizes* that the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,[7] remains the only international instrument exclusively devoted to older persons, and that measures towards achieving its objectives should be strengthened so as to improve its positive impact on the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons;

5. *Also recognizes* that there is no binding international human rights instrument exclusively devoted to older persons, notes the importance of strengthening the implementation of current arrangements at the national and international levels to protect the human rights of older persons, and encourages Member States to continue discussions to explore all alternative measures to improve the protection of the human rights of older persons, and to mainstream their human rights throughout existing mechanisms, policies and programmes;

6. *Encourages* Governments to actively address, through national, regional and international efforts, issues that affect older persons and to ensure that the social integration of older persons and the promotion and protection of their human rights form an integral part of development policies at all levels;

7. *Invites* Member States to continue to share their national experiences in developing and implementing policies and programmes aimed at strengthening the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons, including within the framework of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing established by the General Assembly in paragraph 28 of its resolution 65/182 of 21 December 2010;

8. *Recommends* that States parties to existing international human rights instruments, where appropriate, address the situation of older persons more explicitly in their reports, and encourages treaty body monitoring mechanisms and special procedures mandate holders, in accordance with their mandates, to pay more attention to the situation of older persons in their dialogue with Member States, in their consideration of reports and in their country missions;

9. *Encourages* Member States to ensure that older persons have access to information about their rights so as to enable them to participate fully and justly in their societies and to claim full enjoyment of all human rights;

10. *Invites* relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, including relevant human rights mandate holders and treaty bodies and the regional commissions, as well as intergovernmental and relevant non-governmental organizations with an interest in the matter, to continue to make contributions to the work entrusted to the Open-ended Working Group, as appropriate;

11. *Encourages* Member States to continue to contribute to the work of the Open-ended Working Group, in particular by presenting measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons, such as best practices, lessons learned and possible content for a multilateral legal instrument, as appropriate, in order to enable it to fulfil its existing mandate;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide all necessary support to the Open-ended Working Group, within existing resources, for the organization of a seventh working session, in 2016.

80th plenary meeting
17 December 2015